

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please amended the claims as follows:

1. (Twice Amended) A method of restricting software operation within a license for use with a computer including an erasable, non-volatile memory area of a ~~BIOS~~ of the computer, and a volatile memory area; the method comprising the steps of:

selecting a program residing in the volatile memory,

using an agent to set up ^α verification structure in the erasable, non-volatile memory of the BIOS, the verification structure accommodating data that includes at least one license record,

verifying the program using at least the verification structure from the erasable non-volatile memory of the BIOS, and

acting on the program according to the verification.

3. (Amended) A method according to claim 2, wherein setting up a verification structure further comprising the steps of: establishing, between the computer and the bureau, a two-way data-communications linkage; transferring, from the computer to the bureau, a request-for-license including an identification of the computer and the license-record's contents from the selected program; forming an encrypted license-record at the bureau by encrypting parts of the request-for-license using part of the identification as an encryption key; transferring, from the bureau to the computer, the encrypted license-record; and storing the encrypted license record in the erasable non-volatile memory area of the BIOS.

4. (Amended) A method according to claim 2, wherein verifying the program further comprises the steps of: establishing, between the computer and the bureau, a two-way data-communications linkage; transferring, from the computer to the bureau, a request-for-

license verification including an identification of the computer, an encrypted license-record for the selected program from the erasable, non-volatile memory area of the BIOS, and the program's license-record; enabling the comparing at the bureau; and transferring, from the bureau to the computer, the result of the comparing.

5. (Amended) A method according to claim 3 wherein the identification of the computer includes the unique key.

6. (Amended) A method according to claim 1 wherein selecting a program includes the steps of: establishing a licensed-software-program in the volatile memory of the computer wherein said licensed-software-program includes contents used to form the license-record.

7. (Amended) A method according to claim 6 wherein using an agent to set up the verification structure includes the steps of: establishing or certifying the existence of a pseudo-unique key in a first non-volatile memory area of the computer; and establishing at least one license-record location in the first nonvolatile memory area or in the erasable, non-volatile memory area of the BIOS.

9. (Amended) A method according to claim 7 wherein verifying the program includes the steps of: encrypting the licensed-software-program's license-record contents from the volatile memory area or decrypting the license-record in the erasable, non-volatile memory area of the BIOS, using the pseudo-unique key; and comparing the encrypted licenses-software-program's license-record contents with the encrypted license-record in the erasable, non-volatile

memory area of the BIOS, or comparing the license-software-program's license-record contents with the decrypted license-record in erasable non-volatile memory area of the BIOS.

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10. (Amended) A method according to claim 9 wherein acting on the program includes the step: restricting the program's operation with predetermined limitations if the comparing yields non-unity or insufficiency.

11. (Amended) A method according to claim 22 wherein the first non-volatile memory area is a ROM section of a BIOS.

12. (Amended) A method according to claim 1 wherein the erasable, non-volatile memory area is a E²PROM section of the BIOS.

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ci 16. (Amended) The method of Claim 22, wherein the unique key includes a pseudo-unique key.

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17. (Amended) The method according Claim 12, wherein the step of using the agent to set up the verification record, including the license record, includes encrypting a license record data in the program using at least the unique key.

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18. (Amended) The method according to Claim 12, wherein the step of verifying the program includes a decrypting the license record data accommodated in the erasable second non-volatile memory area of the BIOS using at least the unique key.

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16. (Amended) The method according to Claim 2, wherein the step of verifying the program includes encrypting the license record that is accommodated in the program using at least the unique key.

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20. (Amended) A method for accessing a software program using a pseudo-unique key stored in a first non-erasable non-volatile memory area of a computer, the first non-volatile memory area being unable to be programmatically changed, the method, comprising:
loading a software program residing in a volatile memory area of the computer;
extracting license information from the software program;
encrypting license information using the pseudo-unique key stored in the first non-volatile memory area;
storing the encrypting license information in a second erasable, writable, non volatile memory area of the BIOS of the computer;
subsequently verifying the software program based on the encrypted license information stored in the second erasable, writable, non-volatile memory area of the BIOS; and
acting on the software program based on the verification.

Please add the following new claims:

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21. (New) The method of claim 20, wherein the verification comprises:
extracting the license information from the software program;
encrypting the license information using the pseudo-unique key stored in the first non-volatile memory area of the computer to form second encrypted license information; and

comparing the encrypted license information stored in the second erasable, writable, non-volatile memory area of the BIOS of the computer with the second encrypted license information.

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22. (New) The method of claim 1, wherein a unique key is stored in a first non-volatile memory area of the computer.

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23. (New) The method according to claim 14, wherein the verification comprises:
extracting the license record from the software program;
encrypting the license record using the unique key stored in the first non-volatile memory area of the computer to form second encrypted license information; and
comparing the encrypted license information stored in the erasable, non-volatile memory area of the BIOS of the computer with the second encrypted license information.
